

Issue	Key improvement area	Actions to be taken (responsibility and date of implementation)	Update on implementation of actions as at 31 January 2019
1	<p><b>Children’s Services</b></p> <p>The Ofsted re-inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked-after and care leavers reported in January 2018 that Children’s Service in Sandwell remained inadequate. The report made 17 recommendations for improvement. Although the Trust went live from 1 April 2018, the council still has a statutory responsibility for service delivery.</p>	<p>The Trust has been contracted to develop children’s social care to be rated requires improvement by 2020 and good by 2022. The Trust is working with its improvement partner, Doncaster Children’s Trust, to support its development. The council is also establishing a client function to monitor delivery of the contract through a performance management framework.</p> <p><b>Director for Children’s Services</b> <b>March 2020</b></p>	<p>The Improvement Board, chaired by Doncaster, is overseeing progress against the 17 recommendations for improvement. Progress is being made and the second Ofsted monitoring visit has recognised this. The third monitoring visit will take place on 29 and 30 January 2019.</p> <p>The Operational Partnership Board has met monthly since April to monitor the Contract between the Council and the Trust. The Strategic Partnership Board has met three times in this financial year. Both Boards are operating effective support and challenge.</p> <p>The council’s Scrutiny Committee received a progress report from Sandwell Children’s Trust in November 2018. A further report will be made in March 2019.</p> <p>The Youth Offending Service, delivered through the Trust, was inspected in September 2018 and rated ‘good’. Adoption Services were inspected in January 2019 and rated as ‘requires improvement’.</p>
2	<p><b>Resilience of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)</b></p> <p>Council approved a balanced budget for 2018/19, but savings of £6.5m for 2019/20 and £6.4m for 2020/21 are needed.</p>	<p>To establish projects to deliver the savings required.</p>	<p>A balanced budget for 2019/20 will be presented to Council for approval on 5 March 2019.</p> <p>In the medium-term, there remain significant uncertainties and lack of clarity over local government funding and plans for 2020/21 and beyond. The Fair Funding Review announced by government will assess and update spending needs and tax raising capacities and set new baseline funding allocations for local authorities with a view to transitioning to the new system from April 2020.</p>

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		<p>To continue the implementation of the vision for the council for 2030.</p> <p>To develop a new Performance Management Framework to replace the scorecard, that will measure progress against the vision and outcomes achieved.</p> <p><b>Executive Director for Resources March 2019</b></p>	<p>Further details of the Fair Funding review are expected in Summer 2019 as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. Current funding forecasts for 2020/21 and 2021/22 show a cumulative shortfall of £5.5 million.</p> <p>A budget challenge group has been established, which comprises all directors and meets monthly to discuss the medium-term budget and to identify and assess options for increased income generation.</p> <p>The other major risk to the resilience of the budget strategy remains the financial implications of increasing demand in Children’s Social Care.</p> <p>In the recent follow up, the peer review team reported that ‘Vision 2030 is embedded within the council and has empowered staff’. It noted there should be a continued focus on ‘a route map for delivery, alignment of resources and measures of success to support the realisation of aspirations’. To this end, wide scale engagement with young people continued throughout 2018 and a borough wide conference to take forward Vision 2030, is being planned to take place in Summer 2019.</p>
3	<p><b>Land Sales and Other Matters</b></p> <p>There are a number of ongoing matter relating to land issues and other matters.</p>	<p>Audit Services will assess how well the new protocol for the disposal of council owned land and buildings is being embedded into the council’s processes and where appropriate, findings will be reported back to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.</p>	<p>The Land and Asset Management Committee is working well and is supported by a robust officer group. All land sales and leases within delegated authority are signed by both the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods and the Director of Regeneration and Growth.</p> <p>Work on assessing compliance with the new protocol for the disposal of council owned land and buildings is underway and Audit Services and the Counter Fraud</p>

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		<p><b>Executive Director for Resources and Executive Director for Neighbourhoods</b></p> <p><b>March 2019</b></p> <p>Outstanding Member conduct matters will continue to be dealt with through the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee.</p> <p><b>Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer</b></p>	<p>team have representation on the Land and Asset Management Officer Group.</p> <p>A number of standards investigations have been completed and were reported to the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee meeting on 28 September 2018, and a small number of others are ongoing.</p>
4	<p><b>Compliance with Contract Procedure Rules and Allocation of Grants</b></p> <p>Three limited assurance internal audit reports were issued on Grants within Neighbourhood Services, Grot Spot Funding and Off Contract Spend within Grounds Maintenance and Parks and Green Spaces. A comprehensive review of Neighbourhood Services, considering the findings of the audit reports was undertaken and an action plan developed to address these matters.</p>	<p>Off contract spend has been subject to monthly audit checks in the Housing and Communities Directorate with reports provided to the Director and Service Managers. A new grants process has been introduced and is now a formal ISO procedure. The process will be managed and resourced by the Business Excellence service area and will be subject to quality and performance rigour from 2018. Audit Services will be undertaking a series of follow up reviews in 2018 to confirm action has been taken and to provide assurance on its effectiveness. Where appropriate,</p>	<p>Off contract spend is monitored at six monthly intervals across Housing and Communities. Reports are provided to the director and all service managers. These reports are discussed and monitored at senior management team. The amount of off contract spend has reduced significantly in this area.</p> <p>New procedures have been implemented for the differing grants/funding with senior officers having sign off responsibility and member consultation taking place. Additional resources have been put into the team to ensure a stronger focus on monitoring and spot-check audits are being undertaken. A compliance audit against the ISO procedure has been planned for completion by the end of March 2019. A monitoring process is now underway to monitor spend and regular budget meetings are held with finance.</p> <p>Previous audit recommendations are being worked upon</p>

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		<p>findings will be reported back to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.</p> <p><b>Executive Director for Neighbourhoods</b></p> <p><b>March 2019</b></p>	<p>and Audit Services are currently undertaking a follow up review.</p>
5	<p><b>Business Continuity</b></p> <p>To ensure that the council has in place a framework for its business continuity planning arrangements, to ensure that it is able to maintain the delivery of critical services in the event of an emergency.</p>	<p>There are service areas throughout the council which need to establish action plans, with milestones developed to complete plans and to establish a strategy for testing, maintaining and reviewing them.</p> <p><b>Executive Director for Neighbourhoods</b></p> <p><b>March 2019</b></p>	<p>There is a total of 33 business continuity plans for all services across the council. 27 of these have been fully developed and six are in draft format awaiting final sign off.</p> <p>There is a total of 12 emergency plans and these include operational plans and guidance documents. Two plans are in their final drafts; The Emergency Transport Plan and the Humanitarian Assistance Centre Plan and these will be completed by March 2019.</p> <p>All business continuity plans, and emergency plans are being reviewed on an annual basis. The Resilience Unit has developed training sessions/exercises for all business continuity service plans in place to ensure they are fit for purpose and that service managers/managers are familiar with them.</p> <p>A large multi-agency exercise is scheduled for 8 March 2019 (Solvay) which will involve testing some of the emergency plans.</p>
6	<p><b>General Data Protection Regulations</b></p> <p>On 25 May 2018, new data</p>	<p>To manage and implement the necessary changes, the council has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created an Information</li> </ul>	<p>Specialist Information Governance support has been secured and a diagnostic exercise is underway to review the work undertaken to date and determine what other</p>

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	<p>protection regulation came into force. The regulation is supported by a new Data Protection Act which is a direct replacement for the Data Protection Act 1998 and applies to all public and private bodies in the United Kingdom. The regulation applies to the collection and processing of personal and/or sensitive personal information. Non-compliance could result in fines of up to £17million.</p>	<p>Governance Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified relevant champions across the council</li> <li>• Established a framework to deliver in</li> <li>• Co-ordinated work across the council</li> <li>• Provided training, guidance and assistance</li> <li>• Refined current processes</li> </ul> <p>Where the council is deemed to be non-compliant, an improvement plan will be developed.</p> <p><b>Director of Law and Governance &amp; Monitoring Officer</b></p>	<p>actions are required to ensure the council's information governance arrangements are robust.</p> <p>The Information Governance Board has been refreshed and a revised action plan is being devised.</p> <p>The diagnostic with also consider requisite actions required to ensure Elected Member understand their information governance duties and obligations</p> <p>The council is also taking requisite steps to ensure compliance with the NHS Toolkit on information governance by 31 March 2019.</p>
7	<p><b>Cyber Security</b></p> <p>The council has undertaken an exercise to assess itself against the "10 Steps to Cyber Security" to ensure it has a co-ordinated approach and understanding of its existing cyber security controls or those available to it. The review highlighted areas where the council required improvement.</p>	<p>An improvement plan is in development which will address some of the more immediate issues. It is the aim of the council to be listed on the directory of organisations awarded Cyber Essentials and to use this as a platform to gain further security accreditation.</p> <p><b>Executive Director for Resources</b></p> <p><b>March 2019</b></p>	<p>The redesign of ICT services now includes a Cyber Security and Connectivity Services team. The Team Manager will be responsible for monitoring incoming cyber security threats and ensuring our infrastructure is well maintained.</p> <p>All service architecture managers responsible for ICT technologies, are establishing a proactive patching and update schedule to ensure security updates are promptly uploaded to all platforms. As part of the Citrix improvement plan, the technology was recently patched to the latest version.</p> <p>The Windows 10 refresh programme was completed in December 2018 ensuring non-Citrix users were deployed</p>

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			<p>with new devices with enhanced security measures.</p> <p>Additional security measures have been applied to email systems to enhance protection of messages to and from our public-sector partners.</p> <p>Sandwell ICT are establishing a regional Cyber Security Working group to collectively discuss potential vulnerabilities and produce mitigation plans.</p> <p>ICT is now a member of the redesigned Information Governance Board and will provide updates and seek approval on security concerns.</p> <p>Information Management Unit is leading on the e-learning packages for raising awareness of cyber security and general data protection regulations. This is scheduled to be implemented and completed by 31 March 2019.</p> <p>There is a suite of organisational policies and procedures which outline to employees of the council the appropriate ways of managing information and computer systems. This will be supported by the procurement of an e-learning software tool which will allow the roll out of training to all staff quickly, timely and effectively. It will be used to provide regular awareness and updates on good practice and includes “testing” to ensure adequate knowledge is embedded in our workforce.</p> <p>A new cyber security governance regime will be introduced in March 2019.</p>